

R 020832Z DEC 97
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8589

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MADRID 011809

S/CT FOR REAP

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PTER](#) [SP](#)
SUBJECT: SPAIN: 1997 ANNUAL TERRORISM REPORT

REF. STATE 203771

11. THE ONLY TERRORIST GROUP OPERATING IN SPAIN IS THE BASQUE TERRORIST GROUP ETA (FATHERLAND AND LIBERTY), WHICH CONTINUED IN 1997 ITS CAMPAIGN OF MURDER, BOMBINGS, KIDNAPPINGS, AND STREET VIOLENCE. THE GOVERNMENT HAD SOME SUCCESS AGAINST ETA DURING THE YEAR, WITH KEY ARRESTS IN SPAIN AND FRANCE AND EXTRADITIONS OF ETA TERRORISTS FROM FRANCE AND LATIN AMERICA. MANY LATIN AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS CONTINUE TO HARBOR ETA TERRORISTS, HOWEVER, IN RESPONSE TO WHICH THE GOVERNMENT LAUNCHED A CAMPAIGN TO CONVINCE LATIN AMERICAN AND OTHER GOVERNMENTS OF THE TRUE NATURE OF ETA. THE MARXIST TERRORIST GROUP "GRAPO" WAS INACTIVE IN 1997 AND SOME OF ITS LEADERS WERE RELEASED FROM PRISON. SPAIN SOUGHT WITH LIMITED SUCCESS AT THE JUNE EU SUMMIT IN AMSTERDAM TO SECURE AGREEMENT ON A PROTOCOL AIMED AT PREVENTING AN EU MEMBER STATE FROM GRANTING POLITICAL ASYLUM TO A NATIONAL OF ANOTHER EU MEMBER STATE. ALSO IN 1997 THE AUTHORITIES BROKE UP A RING OF THE ALGERIAN ISLAMIC TERRORIST GROUP GIA OPERATING IN SPAIN. THERE WERE NO ACTS OF TERRORISM IN SPAIN IN 1997 AGAINST OR AFFECTING U.S. CITIZENS OR FACILITIES.

THE FOLLOWING RESPONSES ARE KEYED TO PARAGRAPH 3 REFTEL.

A) ARRESTS AND PROSECUTIONS OF ETA TERRORISTS WERE ONGOING THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. THERE ARE OVER 500 ETA TERRORISTS IN SPANISH JAILS AND THE NUMBER IS INCREASING. FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE GOVERNMENT MOVED IN 1997 TO PROSECUTE ETA'S POLITICAL WING, THE HERRI BATASUNA (HB) POLITICAL PARTY, WHICH HAS SEATS IN THE NATIONAL AND BASQUE REGIONAL PARLIAMENTS. ALL 23 MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE (EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE) OF THIS LEGAL POLITICAL PARTY WERE BROUGHT TO TRIAL IN OCTOBER ON CHARGES OF VIOLATING THE SPANISH LAW CRIMINALIZING COLLABORATION WITH AN ARMED BAND. THE CHARGE STEMS FROM HB'S DISSEMINATION DURING THE 1996 NATIONAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN OF A VIDEO CONTAINING FOOTAGE OF ETA TERRORISTS ADVOCATING VIOLENCE. ON DECEMBER 1, SENTENCES OF SEVEN YEARS AND FINES OF ABOUT 3,500 DOLLARS FOR EACH OF THE 23 WERE ANNOUNCED.

B) THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT HAS ENERGETICALLY SOUGHT EXTRADITION FROM COUNTRIES IN WHICH ETA FUGITIVES RESIDE, AND HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL, PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO FRANCE. FRENCH-SPANISH COOPERATION IN 1997 HAS LED TO KEY ARRESTS OF ETA LEADERS AND EXTRADITIONS FROM FRANCE TO SPAIN. JUST BEFORE THE FRENCH-SPANISH SUMMIT IN DECEMBER, THE FRENCH INTERIOR MINISTER ANNOUNCED THAT IN 1996, 144 PEOPLE DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY CONNECTED WITH ETA WERE ARRESTED ON FRENCH SOIL AND IN THE FIRST 10 MONTHS OF 1997 53 SUCH PERSONS WERE ARRESTED, 23 OF THEM SPANISH BASQUES. THE MINISTER ADDED THAT 62 ETA ACTIVISTS WERE TRIED IN FRANCE IN 1997, AND THAT SINCE JANUARY 1, 1996, 23 SPANISH ETA TERRORISTS WERE EXTRADITED AND HANDED OVER TO SPANISH AUTHORITIES. SPAIN HAS ALSO SOUGHT EXTRADITIONS FROM LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES. THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND MEXICO EXTRADITED ETA TERRORISTS TO SPAIN IN 11997. THERE HAVE BEEN NO TERRORIST RELATED U.S. REQUESTS FOR EXTRADITION IN 1997.

C) THERE HAVE BEEN NO IMPEDIMENTS TO GOS PROSECUTION OR EXTRADITION OF SUSPECTED TERRORISTS.

D) SPANISH GOVERNMENT LEADERS, INCLUDING PRESIDENT JOSE MARIA AZNAR AND INTERIOR MINISTER JAIME MAYOR OREJA, HAVE REPEATEDLY, FREQUENTLY, AND PUBLICLY DENOUNCED ETA TERRORISM. THEY SIMILARLY SPEAK OUT PUBLICLY AGAINST TERRORIST INCIDENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND ELSEWHERE. FOLLOWING THE KIDNAPPING

AND MURDER OF A TOWN COUNSELOR IN JULY, THE GOS PUT FORWARD LEGISLATION TO STRENGTHEN LAW ENFORCEMENT AGAINST TERRORISM. THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT CHANGED ITS POLICY OF WILLINGNESS TO ENGAGE IN A DIALOGUE WITH ETA PROVIDED ETA FIRST RENOUNCES VIOLENCE.

E) THE DAILY REQUIREMENTS OF THE ONGOING STRUGGLE AGAINST ETA CONSUME A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF THE TIME AND RESOURCES OF THE GOS. THAT ASIDE, THE FOLLOWING INTERVENTIONS IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA BY THE GOVERNMENT ARE NOTEWORTHY. IN NOVEMBER 1996 SPAIN BECAME THE FIRST MEMBER OF THE EU TO RATIFY THE EUROPEAN EXTRADITION TREATY SIGNED ON SEPTEMBER 27, 1996. SPAIN SIGNED A NUMBER OF EXTRADITION TREATIES WITH LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES. THE GOS INTRODUCED MEASURES FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE EU'S INTER-GOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE THAT WOULD HAVE MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR A MEMBER STATE TO GRANT POLITICAL ASYLUM TO A NATIONAL OF ANOTHER MEMBER STATE, BUT DUE TO CONSIDERABLE OPPOSITION FROM CERTAIN EU MEMBERS, A MUCH WATERED DOWN VERSION WAS EVENTUALLY APPROVED AT THE JUNE EU AMSTERDAM SUMMIT. THE AGREED TEXT PRESERVES THE RIGHT TO GRANT ASYLUM TO A NATIONAL OF ANOTHER EU MEMBER STATE BUT MERELY REQUIRES THE ASYLUM GRANTING STATE TO INFORM THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL (THE REST OF THE EU MEMBER STATES) OF ITS ACTION. SPANISH CONCERN ON THIS ISSUE IS MOTIVATED BY THE SEVERAL YEARS OLD REFUSAL OF BELGIUM TO EXTRADITE TWO ETA TERRORISTS TO SPAIN ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE REQUEST FOR POLITICAL ASYLUM OF THE TWO MUST BE RESOLVED IN THE BELGIAN COURT SYSTEM FIRST. OTHER ACTIONS BY THE GOS DURING THE YEAR INCLUDED THE MAKING AND DISTRIBUTION OF A VIDEO PURPORTING TO TELL THE TRUE STORY OF ETA, INTENDED MAINLY FOR DISTRIBUTION IN LATIN AMERICA, WHERE SOME GOVERNMENTS AND PUBLIC OPINION IN SOME COUNTRIES CONTINUE TO VIEW ETA IN ROMANTIC, "FREEDOM FIGHTER" TERMS. TO REINFORCE THE VIDEO, A BIPARTISAN DELEGATION OF THE SPANISH PARLIAMENT TRAVELLED TO SELECTED LATIN AMERICAN STATES TO REINFORCE THE MESSAGE OF THE VIDEO. PRESIDENT AZNAR, ON A VISIT TO CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA, ANNOUNCED THE SIGNING OF NEW EXTRADITION AGREEMENTS WITH VARIOUS STATES OF THE REGION, INCLUDING PANAMA.

F) THERE WAS NO SPANISH GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM IN 1997.

G) THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT MADE NO PUBLIC STATEMENTS IN SUPPORT OF A TERRORIST-SUPPORTING COUNTRY ON A TERRORISM ISSUE IN 1997.

H) THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE SINCE 1996 IN THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE TOWARD TERRORISM, INTERNATIONAL OR DOMESTIC.

I) UNDER THE NEW TRANSATLANTIC AGENDA, SIGNED IN MADRID IN DECEMBER 1995, THE U.S. AND THE EU, OF WHICH SPAIN IS A MEMBER, MAINTAIN ONGOING ANTI-TERRORIST COOPERATION ACROSS A BROAD FRONT. THE FIRST BILATERAL COUNTERTERRORISM CONSULTATIONS WITH THE U.S. TOOK PLACE IN MAY, WHEN THE GOS HOSTED A DELEGATION LED BY THE DEPARTMENT COORDINATOR FOR SECURITY AND COUNTER TERRORISM. THE GOS HAS REQUESTED THAT BILATERAL TERRORISM CONSULTATIONS WITH THE U.S. BE INSTITUTIONALIZED ON AN ANNUAL BASIS.

J) GOS COUNTERTERRORISM COOPERATION WITH THE U.S. IS EXCELLENT. AN EXAMPLE OF THIS WAS THE DECEMBER 4, 1996 SPANISH EXTRADITION OF ACHILLE LAURO HIJACKER MAJID AL-MOLQI, TO ITALY. GOS OFFICIALS WERE AWARE OF THE CONSIDERABLE U.S. INTEREST IN AL-MOLQI'S EXTRADITION. AL MOLQI HAD FAILED TO RETURN TO PRISON IN ROME IN FEBRUARY 1996 AT THE END OF A 12-DAY PAROLE. HE WAS LATER PICKED UP IN SPAIN.

K) THE USG HAS NOT IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS SOUGHT SPANISH COOPERATION IN THE PREVENTION OF ANY PARTICULAR ACT OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM AGAINST U.S. CITIZENS OR INTERESTS.

ROSSIN